

# Expert on Soviet Law

Harold Joseph Berman

Special to The New York Times.

MOSCOW, Aug. 17—A few minutes after a Soviet court had dismissed his claim for royalties for the estate of Sir Arian Conan Doyle today, Prof. Harold Joseph Berman lit a straight, unholmesian pipe and decided that he was not sorry he had traveled to Moscow twice in the last year to try to overcome the Soviet Union's reluctance to pay foreign authors whose works it published. Furthermore, his long study of the evolution of the Soviet legal system has left him convinced that the law is a useful path on which East and West can try to make effective contact.

**Man in the News** Soviet Union's reluctance to pay foreign authors whose works it published. Furthermore, his long study of the evolution of the Soviet legal system has left him convinced that the law is a useful path on which East and West can try to make effective contact.

Professor Berman thinks legal contacts are somewhere between useful but largely entertaining cultural exchanges and troublesome diplomatic relations. Through Western claims here for authors' and inventors' rights and through Soviet claims in the United States for the delivery of bequests left to Russians, and through trade contracts and the legal proceedings arising therefrom, he believes the first steps might be taken toward business-like relations.

It is to these problems that he has decided to devote his career, and his biggest regret is that so few other Americans have entered the field of Soviet law.

His second major ambition is to find ways of teaching Americans about their own legal tradition and comparing it with European and Soviet law in an effort to point up basic differences between the Western and Soviet societies.

## Support for His Beliefs

Professor Berman has found support for his belief in the many contacts he has been able to make, during four visits here in five years, with leading Soviet jurists, prosecutors and lawyers. He has found that everything they told him in 1955 about changes in the legal system has turned out to be correct. He also was one of the first Westerners to be told of the release of political prisoners after the Stalin era.

Although he had been involved with the law since



Associated Press

## Taught himself Russian

School, he was drafted into the Signal Corps. While serving in Europe for three years—he won a Bronze Star—he became aware of the importance of the Soviet Union and his unawareness of it.

He taught himself Russian and by the time he returned to Yale Law School he had decided to study Soviet law. There was no one to teach it, however, and it became a supplementary activity.

After graduation he taught for a year at Stanford University and then became one of the first Yale men ever invited to the Harvard Law School Faculty. He has been there since, teaching torts, legal problems of international trade and the comparison of Soviet and American law.

## Author of Several Books

Occasionally he also teaches an undergraduate course on the nature and functions of the law, which is the title of one of the seven books he has written or edited. Five of them deal with the Soviet Union.

Professor Berman is a research associate at Harvard's Russian Research center. In 1952, when he became a full professor, he was named to the center's Executive Committee.

SANTIAGO, Chile, Aug. 17—Haiti asked the Council of the Organization of American States tonight to intervene in the invasion of her territory by

BY TAD SZULC

found on Page 10.

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